

ARTICLE APPEARED  
ON PAGE 2A

BALTIMORE SUN  
29 October 1985

## U.S. cites spread of Soviet, other chemical arms

By Charles W. Corddry  
Washington Bureau of The Sun

WASHINGTON — The Defense Department, seeking to fortify its request for nerve gas appropriations, said yesterday that Russia had significantly increased production and storage of chemical weapons over the past decade and that such weapons were spreading to the arsenals of many other countries.

A 22-page report compiled by the Defense Intelligence Agency said Soviet chemical weapons storage capacity increased 26 percent from 1975 to 1985. That was on top of a 17 percent expansion in the first five years after President Richard M. Nixon halted U.S. production of chemical agents in 1969, it said.

The Pentagon issued the report, along with warnings about the "deteriorating" condition of American nerve gas stocks, as the House neared crucial votes this week on whether to start production of new types.

The report said there were 10 production plants and nine major depots in the U.S.S.R. for chemical agents, and 32 "forward deployment areas" throughout Eastern Europe where chemical weapons have been stored.

The report warned of the spread of chemical weapons to countries

outside the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the Soviet-led Warsaw Pact. It said at least 13 countries, which it did not name, had or were trying to obtain chemical weapons. It said: "More countries now have a chemical weapons capability than at any time in the past."

A Senate-House conference committee report, reconciling differences on the annual defense authorization bill, provides for production of binary munitions — chemicals that are harmless in storage but are combined into lethal nerve gas as the bomb or rocket carrying them nears its target.

The House, having voted earlier this year to include nerve gas in the authorization bill, is scheduled to vote on the Senate-approved conference report today.

But the House Appropriations Committee, by a two-vote margin, has eliminated the requested \$164 million for nerve gas from the defense appropriations bill that is scheduled for floor debate starting tomorrow. Authorization bills fix policy, but appropriations bills must provide the actual money.

In urging reinstatement of the funds, Defense Secretary Caspar W.

Weinberger's assistant for chemical weapons, Thomas J. Welch, emphasized not only the continuing Soviet buildup but the alleged uselessness of most chemical weapons in the U.S. stockpile.

He said the Pentagon spent \$64 million last year to guard the storage sites and deal with leaky weapons in the "old and militarily unuseful stockpile." The administration wants to spend \$1.5 billion from now to 1994 to destroy this stockpile, stored in Maryland, Alabama, Kentucky, Indiana, Arkansas, Colorado, Utah and Oregon.

The destruction would accompany the production of the new binary munitions under a program expected to cost \$2.5 billion over the same period.

Mr. Welch said the U.S. needed the new munitions so that they could be delivered at relatively long ranges by aircraft carrying "big eye" bombs and at shorter ranges by the Army's multiple-rocket launching system.

The object would be to deter Russian use of chemical weapons which, the Pentagon report said, are available in all types from close-in mortars to long-range missiles.